

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 20, and amend claim 18, as shown below in the detailed listing of all claims which are, or were, in this application:

Claims 1-17 (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) A nucleic acid amplification assay for quantitative and/or qualitative analysis of the presence of a specific analyte or specific analytes in a sample, which analytes, if present, are contained in biological particles of said sample, said assay comprising

forcing said sample in a first direction through a filter which retains said biological particles,

removing biological particles from said filter by a flush flow in a second direction opposite said first direction, and

analyzing biological particles contained in said flush flow by means of a nucleic acid amplification assay,

wherein said flush flow is analyzed for the analyte or analytes without any purification.

19. (Previously presented) The assay of claim 18, further comprising

performing an initial filtration which does not retain the biological particles containing the analyte or analytes but retains particles which might interfere with the analysis of the analyte or analytes, said initial filtration being performed prior to forcing said sample in a first direction through a filter which retains said biological particles.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously presented) The assay of claim 18, wherein retention of the biological particles containing the analyte or analytes by said filter is dependent on the size of the particles.

22. (Previously presented) The assay of claim 18, wherein retention of the biological particles containing the analyte or analytes by said filter is dependent on the chemical properties of the particles.

23. (Previously presented) The assay of claim 18, wherein the biological particles containing the analyte or analytes are selected from the group consisting of prokaryotic or eukaryotic cells or spores or components thereof, viruses or viral particles, complexes comprising protein and/or nucleic acid, and any combination thereof.

24. (Previously presented) The assay of claim 23, wherein the biological particles containing the analyte or analytes are selected from the group consisting of bacteria, bacterial cell, plant pollen, mitochondria, chloroplast, cell nuclei, virus, phage, chromosome and ribosome.

25. (Previously presented) The assay of claim 18, wherein said nucleic acid amplification assay is selected from the group consisting of polymerase chain reaction (PCR), reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR), ligase chain reaction (LCR), proximity ligation assay, nucleic acid sequence based amplification (NASBA), strand displacement amplification (SDA) and any combination thereof.

26. (Previously presented) The assay of claim 18, wherein said flush flow comprises a liquid or a gas not contained in said sample.

27. (Previously presented) The assay of claim 18, wherein the analyte or analytes are selected from the group consisting of a living and/or dead cell or virus; a peptide, a protein or complex thereof; a nucleic acid; and any combination thereof.

28. (Previously presented) The assay of claim 27, wherein the analyte or analytes comprises living and/or dead cells and/or viruses selected from the group consisting of a mold, a yeast, a eukaryotic cell or organism, a pathogenic virus and a cancer cell.

29. (Previously presented) The assay of claim 27, wherein the analyte or analytes comprises nucleic acids selected from the group consisting of DNA, RNA and any derivative thereof.

30. (Previously presented) The assay of claim 27, wherein the analyte or analytes comprises peptides and/or proteins or complexes thereof selected from the group consisting of a hormone, a growth

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factor, an enzyme or parts thereof and/or complexes thereof; and
any combination thereof.